



Recreational Games for the Elderly

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Received: 06/15/2021

Accepted: 08/17/2021

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.34982/2223.1773.2022.V7.No1.007>

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Abstract:

This study deals with the need of promoting greater attention of the elderly with a recreational approach with a view to improve their life quality. A diagnostic revealed the limited variety of recreational choices for this population group, in addition to insufficient orientation of recreational activities according to their likes and preferences, which was associated with their poor engagement in community activities. This research used theoretical, empirical, and statistical methods, which facilitated the collection of data and information necessary to design recreational games for the elderly.

Keywords: elderly, life quality, recreational games

Introduction



Physical and recreational activities contribute to improving life quality in the elderly. It has been proven that it provides a healthier and more esthetic condition, and permits the conservation of more vital and physical strength by preventing the occurrence of certain pathologies. Old age is a relatively long state that could encompass almost one third of human existence, and the last stage of the vital cycle (Aguilera, 2017).

The promotion of healthy old age not only relies on ensuring nutrition, health, living comfort, and hygiene, but also on a useful, productive and independent life.

There is a widespread belief in various sectors of the population that aged people are unimportant in a world lived at a fast pace, globalized, and industrial, as today.

Regarding the elderly, each day a new concept is gaining ground: “We must start to understand and care for the elders in families, as the basic cell of society”. That is how their participation in social life will be effective. (Padrino, 2017)

In Cuba, several actions are being promoted in favor of the study and attention of the elderly, such as ludic activities looking to improve health and life quality (Herrador, 2020), several fitness programs and their effects on the health and life quality of the active elderly (Sierra, 2020), functional training in healthy parks and urban areas (Muñoz, 2020), and promotion of physical activities for healthy aging (Espinosa, 2020). However, other forms must be found to enhance attention of old aging from a social perspective, where the life quality of the elderly can be improved through exchanges, socialization, healthy training, and recreation, among other aspects.

Recreational and social activities are important since they help the elderly enhance their creativity, usefulness, and self-esteem, and to enjoy new interests, foster interpersonal relations, promote wellbeing and satisfaction, and maintain their cognitive and psycho motor skills. (Sánchez, 2014)

Among the programs conducted in the sports facilities is the attention of the elderly, with a perspective to improve the life quality of this group of people. Accordingly, physical culture teachers are responsible of implementing this important task that produces compensation or improvements in health and physical and spiritual wellbeing of these men and women. Nevertheless, there is no fluency in these efforts, since most elders do not attend classes at the elderly reunion groups, except when teachers pick them up at their homes or if the elders are living in nursing homes.



The application of several diagnostic tools, like surveys, interviews, documentary review, and observations of this age group corroborated the existence of shortcomings in the attention of the elderly, which behaves as follows:

- Limited variety of recreational choices, considering their likes and preferences.
- Inappropriate orientation of physical-recreational activities for the attention of the elderly.
- Inaccurate diagnostic of recreational likes and preferences of this group of people.

Accordingly, the aim of this paper is to help improve the life quality of the elderly through recreational games.

Physical recreation is part of physical culture, and it is one of the most important activities among the many different recreational activity types, with several degrees of complexity, that contribute to enhance the intellectual, spiritual, and cultural horizon of humans. The recreational policy of Cuba is based on the materialistic conception that promotes and encourages the massive practice of sports and recreational activities.

Materials and Methods

Different methods and techniques were used to conduct this study.

Theoretical techniques

Analysis and synthesis: It was used to provide a theoretical rationale for this research, stemming from intellectual operations; breaking down elements and and putting them back together; collecting data and information located in the literature consulted in relation to the main criteria of authors about this topic; revealing the main contributions and limitations to systematize the theoretical foundations of this proposal; conducting an analytical interpretation of the results achieved from the application of empirical methods; and analyzing the theoretical information related to the object of the study with the generalization of the main ideas.

Induction-deduction: It was used to establish the general and particular grounds of the process of physical recreation, the recreational games for the elderly, and the materialization of the games.



Empirical method:

Documentary review: The program and methodological guidelines contain resolutions and national indications with objectives and methods to conduct this work, though they provide no proper articulation with a character defined of how to conduct a specific work in this age group, and activities according to the particular context, all of which which causes a reduction of pertinence and efficiency in the process; hence they are not sufficiently orienting.

The indications of INDER president show the importance of community work, and how physical culture can contribute to it, though these guidelines are general. This paper offers the possibility of implementing actions that contribute to the participation of the elderly in recreational activities through recreational games, which are not mentioned in every aspect of physical culture.

Techniques

A survey to recreation teachers was made to know how the elderly reunion groups are working, and how the activities are prepared to improve life quality.

Group interview to the elderly for an update of their willingness to take recreational activities in their free time, their likes, and recreational preferences.

Lesson observation

To know the conditions in which lessons are delivered, the number of elders that attend, and if in addition to physical exercise, they participate in educational activities to meet their interests.

Discussion groups

They helped confirm the need to open spaces for reflection and dialogue as mechanisms of professional exchange in sport-recreational activities that include the elderly, and to seek consensus about the actions recommended.

It contributed to the creation of new spaces for reflection and dialogue with the family physicians, as mechanisms of professional exchange in the area of physical sports activities,



and the real possibility of performing physical activities and know the opinions about the recreational games.

Statistical mathematical procedure.

Percent calculation: it was used to process and analyze the different instruments included, data processing, and the relation between population and the sample selected.

Results and Discussion

Analysis of the results of group interview to the elderly (Appendix 1)

During the group interview, the elderly stated that the predominant activities in their elderly reunion group is based on exercises to help with their pathologies and muscle strengthening. No other activity type is conceived throughout the lesson.

In reference to the weekend activities, they argued that they are insufficient; they could be held every other weekend, preferably on Saturdays, and added that these activities could be useful to know themselves better and facilitate healthy recreation by exchanging with other elderly reunion groups.

Their opinions about the teachers are favorable, emphasizing on the attention and proper communication. In relation to class attendance, they expressed that other community contexts could be used for these activities in which the community offers their support, and that the potentialities of the context are not properly exploited.

The whole group (100%) coincided that the recreational activities do not include games systematically.

Analysis of the results of the survey to recreation teachers (Appendix 2)



The following data were found: From the total recreation teachers surveyed, 5.5 said that they perform physical activities in the community, but weekend activities that join and motivate the elderly into healthy recreation, socialization, and communication, are not usually held,

Of the sample, 0.6% noted that activities like walks, excursions, dancing parties, collective birthday parties, and others are held, but 0.4% said that recreational activities are absent. Moreover, in relation to the activities performed that fit the likes and preferences of the elderly, they mentioned physical fitness; however, but did not offer a diagnostic of other preferences that might be included, which would meet their expectations within the program for the elderly. The recreational activities do not include games.

As to the inclusion of the possibilities offered by the community context, they refer to the family doctors, but they do not mention other community institutions like the CDR, FMC.

Analysis of the results of lesson observation in the elderly reunion groups (Appendix 3).

A number of 3 lessons were observed to know the conditions in which lessons are delivered, and if they include recreational activities that meet the interests of the elderly. It was confirmed that the though the Physical Culture teacher motivates the elderly to take exercise in class, there was little participation in the elderly reunion groups, compared to the population of elders in the community. Different sets of physical exercises are performed, in contrast to the few recreational activities that encourage greater elder participation. The Physical Culture teacher does not work together with the recreation teacher to know what recreational activities could be performed in this population group.

The present-day conditions and social importance are expressed in the design of recreational games that enhance the incorporation of the elderly to recreational activities performed in the community. This research demonstrates the need to include games of different sort in the recreational program, depending on the characteristics and particularities of the elderly.

Recreational games for the elderly

Goal: To enhance sociability of elders, looking to increase the level of physical and psychological autonomy that contributes to life quality improvements in the elderly.

Specific objectives:



To develop greater physical and capacities in the elderly, according to their interests and specific needs.

To encourage their engagement in activities developed at the community.

Game No. 1

Name: The spoon and the egg

Materials: a basket containing several eggs and a spoon for every participant.

Organization: in groups of three and in rows.

Argumentation: Two groups of 3 people each will be formed, they should have a basket containing several eggs and a spoon for every participant. When the participants have their spoon and egg, they must line up straight, place the spoon in their mouths, and carry the egg on it. The elder is allowed to carry the spoon in the hand if is impossible to place it in the mouth.

Rules:

The hands must not be used if the spoon is carried in the mouth.

All the participants must play at the same time.

The scoring system will be based on counting the eggs that did not break.

The group with the most eggs carried to the finishing line in the time set will be the winner.

Game No. 2

Name: The restless ball.

Materials: a strap ball, chairs or benches, a music player

Organization: seated in circles

Argumentation: seated in circles, one of the participants is chosen to play the music. The person can use a phone, radio, or sing a song. When the music is played, the participants begin to pass the ball to all the group, when the music stops, the player who kept the ball will have to perform a task suggested by their partners (tell a story, sing, recite, etc.).

Rules: the person who keeps the ball in their hands must do what the rest asks.

Game No. 3



Name: Keep it going

Materials: a strap ball

Organization: seated in circles

Argumentation: the elders will have the chance to demonstrate their skills, and memory. First, they should make a circle of all the participants and choose one to stand in the middle. This person will have to toss the ball to one of the participants and say a word. That way, the other player will have to repeat the word and add another. For instance, if the person says “beach”, the other player should say “beach” and then add another, like “sand”. Then, the player will pass the ball to another person, who will have to say the two previous words, plus a third one related to them.

Rules: the one who makes a mistake loses and must complete the task assigned by the group.

Game No. 4

Name: Who has the jewel?

Materials: a piece of jewelry

Organization: in circles

Argumentation: the players form a circle, everyone puts their hands in the back, one of the players hides their object in their hands. Another player stands in the middle of the circle, tricky movements like making believe that the item is passed are allowed. The guide player in the center tries to guess who has the item, standing in front one of the players, asks him or her to show this or her hands. If this player has the item, then will take the center of the circle. Otherwise, the guide will continue to guess who has the piece of jewelry.

Rule: the one who has the item and is discovered will become the guide.

Game No. 5

Name: The stop (traditional, popular game)



Materials: music

Organization: scattered

Argumentation: a large area is used, where a group of elders can dance in couples to the sound of music until the teacher says “stop!”, then everyone must freeze.

Rules: the one who moves must tell a joke.

Game No. 6

Name: North, south, east, west

Materials: no material

Organization: scattered

Argumentation: the players must stand with slightly spread legs. When the teacher mentions any cardinal compass point the players should face it. The points are defined before starting the game. Every time someone is wrong, he or she will sit and wait until the last one standing remains, then they start over.

Rules: the whole body must turn.

Game No. 7

Name: Who gets dressed faster?

Materials: clothing items

Organization: in rows

Argumentation: it consists in walking as fast as possible to a point where the players have left an item of clothing, then put it on and return to the starting point the faster the better, until the first row is done.

Rules: players must not start running until they are properly wearing the clothing item.



The recreational teachers assessed the proposal of the recreational games for the elderly to be included in different manifestations of recreation, along with the pertinence and novelty of the proposal, which offers an innovating method of scientific contents through scientific research, thus motivating elders to join physical recreational activities. The aim of the study was met upon teacher acceptance of the proposal, by corroborating its scientific-methodological value.

Conclusions

Considering the purpose of this study, the games suggested contribute to a more dynamic process of incorporating the elderly to physical recreational activities, ensuring healthy recreation in the context of activities that lead to their active participation in the program. The proposal of recreational games offers recreational teachers a different choice of work with the elders, that guarantees recreation while designing the activities.

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Conflict of interests:

The authors declare the absence of conflict of interests in relation to this manuscript.

APPENDIXES:

GROUP INTERVIEW TO THE ELDERLY

Objective: To confirm the opinions of elders about the development of the program of attention of the elderly in their residential area.

Guide:

1. Describe how the work of the elderly reunion group is performed in your residential area.
2. The teachers design activities for the weekends.
3. What is your opinion of the work done by the recreation teachers in terms of coping with your needs, potentialities, and preferences?
4. Apart from the activities designed in the program, do you perform others that provide recreation?
5. Do you think that the possibilities of cooperation of community factors and their initiatives are used?

SURVEY TO TEACHERS

Objective: To check how they conceive the work with the elders, and the preparation they receive to run the program.

Dear teacher: This study aims to optimize the work with the elders.

We request your cooperation with these questions. Thank you. Questionnaire:

- 1- Besides these frequencies, do you program weekend activities with your elders?
- 2- What are the recreational activities that you perform on weekends?



- 3- Do you consider the likes of elder people to plan your activities?
- 4- Do you use recreational games to perform activities with the elderly?